



For Immediate Release:

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BLM Volunteer Patricia Biggs of Yuma, Arizona Recognized by "Take Pride in America" Programs

Trish Biggs, who spends her summers at the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Fishermen's Bend Recreation Site near Mills City, OR received special recognition from Interior Secretary Norton today as she launched a renewed and revitalized "Take Pride In America" campaign. Trish has donated over 1,000 volunteer hours per season, averaging 60 hours a week, for the past 11 years.

Trish and her late husband began as campground hosts in 1984, working each summer at various BLM sites. Later, Trish began to volunteer as a clerical assistant and public contact in the headquarters office of the Fishermen's Bend Recreation Site. Her expertise and commitment have helped the BLM provide outstanding customer service at this popular site. The agency estimates that the monetary value of her service is about \$19,200 per season, a savings of \$211,200 to the bureau.

Modeled after the highly visible and successful national cleanup endeavor initiated by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, the new Take Pride In America was unveiled by Secretary Norton at a luncheon newsmaker speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. It will become part of President George W. Bush's Freedom Corps.

"By working with fellow volunteers, young and old, we lend our hands to heal our land, one acre at a time. And in so doing, we are celebrating the start of the national, grassroots, bipartisan Take Pride in America program," Secretary Norton said. "Take Pride In America will empower volunteers from every corner of America to restore and improve our parks, refuges, recreation areas and cultural and historical sites. The program inspires citizen stewardship through a bold and innovative public communication campaign. Outstanding volunteer efforts are rewarded with presidential recognition."

With the announcement of the new Take Pride In America, the Department of the Interior launched a special Take Pride Web site - www.TakePride.gov - that outlines program goals and offers ideas and suggestion for citizen, group and corporate involvement. Interior will serve as the lead federal department and will enlist the cooperation and commitment of all agencies in the federal government.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land - 261 million surface acres - than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.9 billion and a workforce of some 10,000 full-time, permanent employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.